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GARDEN CALENDAR

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A radio talk by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry ~~July 14, 1931~~ delivered through WRC and 42 other radio stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, July 14, 1931.

U. S. Department of Agriculture

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Hello Folks: Last Tuesday when the bell rang I was answering a question regarding the control of Pear Blight. I had suggested the cutting away of all blighted portions of the trees, especially during the late fall and the winter in order to prevent so far as possible the reinestation the following spring. Dr. M. B. Waite, in charge of the work with fruit diseases in the Department suggests painting the wounds with coal tar to which a very small amount of creosote is added as a thinner. Dr. Waite also emphasizes the necessity for disinfecting the wounds where the branches are removed, also the tools after each cut by means of a sponge dipped in a solution of corrosive sublimate of about the strength used as a disinfectant in sickrooms and hospitals. This treatment of the wounds should be done before the tar is applied, while in the case of the pruning saw and shears the treatment should be given after each and every cut is made.

We are receiving many inquiries regarding the diseases of roses, especially regarding mildew and black-spot two of the most prevalent and destructive diseases of roses. Certain varieties of roses, the Dorothy Perkins climber for example, are very subject to the attack of mildew, while others like the Dr. Van Fleet climber rarely ever mildews. Much depends upon the location in which the plants are growing. If they are in the open where they get plenty of air and sunlight they are not so liable to suffer from mildew but it is always wise to select the more resistant varieties for planting. In this connection we can offer you Farmer's Bulletin No. 1-5-4-7-F, on the subject of Rose Diseases, their causes and control.

While powdery mildew seldom kills a rose plant, it does completely ruin the appearance of the foliage and the buds. Another rose disease that causes black spots on the leaves is known as black-spot. Thorough spraying of the rose plants with Bordeaux mixture is fairly effective for controlling the black-spot disease but has the disadvantage that it renders the plants unsightly. Dusting the plants with a mixture consisting of 9 parts dusting sulphur and 1 part lead arsenate is also recommended in Farmer's Bulletin 1547-F on Rose Diseases. Apply the dust with a small dust gun or take a piece of cheesecloth, double it two or three times and sew it into a bag, place a small amount of the sulphur dust in it and shake the bag over the rose plants and among the foliage. A large amount of the dust is not required but it should be evenly distributed.

Here is a correspondent in St. Louis, Missouri, who evidently got a little fun out of what we had to say a couple of weeks ago about weeds in lawns and he very facetiously wants to know where he can get a steam shovel to dig the dandelions out of his lawn. Well maybe that would be a good way to get rid of them.

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A correspondent wants to know how to control Bermuda grass. I am frank to admit that I do not know, but perhaps some of the workers in the Forage Crop section could tell us.

Last year, I had very good success in killing out a small patch of Bermuda grass by completely covering it with mulch paper the same as is being recommended for mulching between rows of certain garden crops. This paper is similar to roofing paper, but is very thin and strong and by lapping the edges a few inches so that the grass would have no chance to come out into the sunlight and air, it becomes smothered in the course of a year or so. Bermuda grass is, of course, very persistent and difficult to eradicate. I have found that it can be kept under control where it occurs in gardens by keeping the tops shaved off as fast as they appear, then during plowing and cultivation many of the roots can be removed. Like dandelions in the lawn Bermuda in the garden is pretty troublesome.

Here is a point for the consideration of apple growers who expect to pack any of their crop for cold storage holding. A number of years ago it was found by workers in the Department that by wrapping apples in paper saturated with a special mineral oil that the fruit would be kept free from scald, both in storage and after it is removed. Dr. D. F. Fisher, In Charge of Fruit and Vegetable Transportation and Storage Investigations, suggested that I warn the growers not only to have a sufficient supply of the oiled paper on hand in ample time, but also to see to it that the paper contains the necessary amount of oil. Recently, several samples have been examined and found to contain less oil than is necessary. Twelve-pound paper should, Dr. Fisher says contain at least 17-1/2 or 18 per cent of oil, while 14-pound paper should contain at least 15 per cent of oil.

Another point with regard to the use of the paper, especially where the shredded paper is being used for bushel basket and barrel packs that plenty of paper should be mixed through the pack. Many packers have gotten the idea that if they put a little paper on the bottom of the barrel or basket and a little on top, mainly to improve the looks of the package that that is all that is necessary. In order to prevent scald and fulfil the purpose for which the paper is used it should be well distributed and come in contact with every part of the fruit.

Dr. Fisher suggests that in case growers have paper on hand which does not contain quite the required amount of oil that it be used for packs that are not to remain very long in storage, but which will go on the market early in the winter.

Further information on the whole subject of the use of oil paper for packing apples may be procured by writing to the Bureau of Plant Industry, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.